

The Black Larva of *Abraxas grossulariata* L.

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Mr M. L. Street's article on Melanism in the larvae of *Abraxas grossulariata* L. (*Ent. Rec.*, **87**: 97) was most interesting, but this melanism is not confined to industrial or urban districts.

When I was collecting in late April and early May 1915 on Inishmore, the Aran Islands, in the Atlantic at the mouth of Galway Bay, I found a number of almost completely black larvae, together with normal ones. They were feeding on blackthorn on the limestone slabs just above the limit of cultivation, about 200 feet above sea-level. There the blackthorn creeps almost like a rockrose over the slabs, owing to the Atlantic gales.

I brought home about a dozen of these larvae and bred out ten moths, which I still have, and most luckily preserved one of the larvae, which is still in my collection. It is very much blacker than the black one figured on plate III, figure 2, in Mr Street's paper. The head and first segment are of normal colouration, otherwise it is entirely black except for two minute spots, much smaller than a pin-head, on segments 4, 5 and 6. These black larvae were accompanied by a number of the normal colour. I do not remember any intermediates.

The pupae were normal and the perfect insects rather disappointing, though well worth keeping. They are not in the least melanic, but in most of them the orange band on the fore-wings is more brilliant and wider than in any wild specimens I have seen in other localities. I briefly recorded them in an article on the Aran Islands which appeared in the *Entomologist* for 1928, p. 43. They are also mentioned in Baynes, *Supplement to a Revised Catalogue of Irish Macrolepidoptera*, p. 18.

There is of course no industrialisation in the Aran Islands nearer than the United States or Dublin. There was not even household fuel in my time except for a lighter load of coal and turf brought over occasionally from Galway. I intended revisiting Inishmore ten years ago, but a friend who had been there the year before told me the island had been so altered by tourism that I decided not to go.

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When I was there in 1915, the little St. Ronan's Hotel run by Miss O'Flaherty was the only accommodation. It had only four guest rooms at the time of my stay. Two of these were permanently occupied by priests, Fathers Eaton and O'Flaherty, and the third by the representative of the Congested Districts Board, Mr Gallagher, so I was lucky to get in. The only conveyance was one donkey-cart, all else had to be pushed on barrows or carried in panniers.

I am told today that there are a dozen "jaunting-cars" there, simply for visitors. When I first visited Ireland over 60 years ago I never heard this name except at Killarney, everywhere else they were called side-cars or outside-cars. Killarney was ever the seat of this sort of stuff; in those days visitors were shown the Colleen Bawn's Rock, although that unfortunate girl was never within 70 miles of the place.